

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15th
1PM, at the FRIENDS MEETINGHOUSE

6th & Herr Sts., Harrisburg

NETWORK REVIEW

At our October meeting we talked about what the Network has been doing for the past year and what we might do in 1981. We concentrated on two ideas, and what follows is a condensation of that discussion.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Presently there is no state-wide Lesbian/Gay organization keeping track of how the Pennsylvania House and Senate deal with our issues and needs. Many elected representatives have never had contact with the political Lesbian/Gay community. We have minimal input into the legislative process as it affects us. We frequently hear of anti-Lesbian/Gay legislation when it is almost too late to do anything about it. Many Pennsylvania legislators think of our community as only an urban phenomenon.

As the country turns to the right (as of this writing we do not know who will be the next US President), minorities, particularly the highly vulnerable Lesbian/Gay minority, are becoming a specific target for repressive actions. We need an effective, independent and non-partisan political organization to work for Lesbian/Gay rights in Pennsylvania. We would like to work with local Lesbian/Gay political groups, as well as in coalition with like-minded, state-wide human rights organizations (i.e. NOW). Any such activity we may take on should keep in mind our present resources, must be planned very carefully, and has to be undertaken with the full realization that this project would be very long-term.

ANNUAL STATE LESBIAN/GAY CONFERENCE

We firmly believe that the yearly conference is an integral part of the ongoing process of building a strong Lesbian/Gay community in Pennsylvania. We need to continue to involve as many of the component groups within our community in the planning and activities of the conference. Having been involved in three conferences, we realize the necessity of continued improvement in the selection of workshops and workshop leaders, scheduling, arrangement of facilities, and the addition of new activities. The Network wants to maintain its active involvement with the conference, since it can be very important to the effectiveness of whatever projects we are working on.

AT OUR NEXT MEETING

The meeting on November 15th will be one of our most important. At this meeting we will be setting the direction of the Network for the next year. We will be reviewing the two ideas we discussed at the October meeting - legislative action and the state conference - and we will be deciding whether to put our energies into one or the other, or a combination of both. We will also be holding the annual election of officers. We URGE all members of the Network, and any other interested members of the Pennsylvania Lesbian/Gay community, to attend.

PRIDE '80 REVIEW

A discussion of PRIDE '80 at our October meeting covered the positive and negative points of the conference, and gave us much to think about for the planning of future conferences. Overall, the attitudes towards PRIDE '80 were enthusiastic. A wide selection of workshops and plenty of registrants provided an excellent atmosphere for a fun-filled and educational weekend. The total attendance was 229, only six less than PRIDE '79. Response from the Harrisburg area was encouraging, and, as usual, we had people from all parts of the state. One of the most frequent comments made, concerned the variety of people from many segments or our community.

The conference organizers agreed that the construction being done on the Holiday Inn created certain obstacles. The hotel had changed ownership since we originally contracted for the conference. With that new ownership came numerous shifts of management - right up to the week before the conference. Even with the best efforts to work around these obstacles, there weren't enough meeting rooms available and people did loose time finding workshop rooms and trying to follow the schedule.

All together, there were 30 planned workshops, meetings and other gatherings, plus numerous spontaneous workshops. Only one workshop had to be cancelled, because the facilitator did not show up. Suggestions for future conferences included having workshop facilitators choose their own topics, and the possibility of inviting specialists in seminars to organize major topics. There was also discussion concerning the restrictions on special interest workshops, i.e. "Women Only" and "Men Only". Some felt there were advantages to this arrangement, others felt this separation was unnecessary.

The introduction of a new element - the film festival - brought enthusiastic responses. The line-up of films was an alternative to a totally workshop oriented conference. The films also provided participants with new dimension on the cultural diversity of our community. There were some complaints about the conflicts with film schedules and workshop times, which should be worked out for future conferences.

Special applause should be extended to all the performers at PRIDE '80. Each was able to bring their talents, humor, knowledge, and individual experiences in a purely delightful manner. The Friday and Saturday evening entertainment segments were memorable occasions. Our very sincerest thanks to Edwina Lee Tyler, Nanette Nancuso, and Tom Wilson. We certainly learned much from each of them.

A few odds and ends: It was suggested that the business meeting be held Friday night so that announcements could be made and the tone of the conference could be more clearly set. The exhibits were mostly successful, though many participants were disappointed that Giovanni's Room did not arrive until Saturday afternoon. It was generally agreed that the food at the banquet was better, if only slightly so, than that at last year's banquet.

Finally, it should come as good news that PRIDE '80 did not loose money. We were even able to pay off most of the debts from PRIDE '79, and may have a few dollars left over for next year. Most importantly, special thanks to all the volunteers who made PRIDE '80 a success, and especially to the conference participants, without whom there would be no annual conference.

